

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIE-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 /072 R

DRAFTED BY IO/UNP:SESCUDERO/TNILES
APPROVED BY IO:GBHELMAN
AF:RMOOSE
AF/S:DPETTERSON

-----124162 120306Z /63

O 120126Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 008298

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PORG,SF,WA

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: PROXIMITY TALKS IN NEW YORK

1. FOLLOWING JANUARY 11 CONTACT GROUP MEETING, DEPARTMENT
UNDERSTANDS THAT POSITIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA AND SWAPO ON
ATTENDANCE AT PROXIMITY TALKS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A) SOUTH AFRICA ACCEPTS NEW YORK AS VENUE. FONMIN BOTHA
WOULD HAVE ATTENDED TALKS BEGINNING JANUARY 17 AND NOW
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AGREES TO JANUARY 23 AS OPENING DATE. HOWEVER, TALKS
BEGINNING JANUARY 23 WOULD ENJOY BOTHA'S PARTICIPATION FOR
LESS THAN TWO DAYS AS HE WOULD BE OBLIGED RETURN TO SOUTH
AFRICA ON 24TH IN CONNECTION WITH PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.
NO RPT NO LATER DATE, INCLUDING FEBRUARY 6, WOULD BE
ACCEPTABLE TO SAG.

B) SWAPO ACCEPTS NEW YORK AS VENUE BUT HAVE REPLIED THAT NO DATE EARLIER THAN JANUARY 30 WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. SWAPO WOULD PARTICIPATE IN TALKS BEGINNING FEBRUARY 6.

2. AT JANUARY 12 CONTACT GROUP MEETING, MISSION SHOULD PROPOSE FOLLOWING DEMARCHE ON SAG BY PRETORIA AMBASSADORS:

-- THE FIVE ARE ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE FOR THE TALKS TO BEGIN ON JANUARY 23 BUT HAVE RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES.

-- IF TALKS SHOULD BEGIN ON THAT DATE, THE CONTACT GROUP HOPES THAT MR. FOURIE WOULD BE ABLE TO REPLACE MR. BOTHA WHEN THE LATTER HAS TO RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES. IN ANY EVENT, THE FIVE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT TWO DAYS ARE SUFFICIENT GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TALKS.

-- THE FIVE CANNOT UNDERSTAND SOUTH AFRICA'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT ANY LATER DATE FOR THE PROXIMITY TALKS, AND URGE THAT SOUTH AFRICA, FOR CONTINGENCY PURPOSES, NAME A DATE FOR THE TALKS AFTER FEBRUARY 1. IN VIEW OF SOUTH AFRICA'S EARLIER COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATE AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT FOR NAMIBIA, THE FIVE CAN SEE NO REASON WHY A DELAY OF ONE WEEK IN CONVENING THE PROXIMITY TALKS SHOULD HAVE SUCH AN IMPACT. INDEED, IF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REFUSAL TO CONSIDER A LATER DATE WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BECOME KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC, THE LOGIC BEHIND IT MIGHT BE WIDELY MISUNDERSTOOD.

-- THE FIVE ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW TO SOUTH AFRICA THEIR STRONG OPPOSITION TO ANY UNILATERAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATES FOR ELECTIONS IN NAMIBIA. FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, THE CONTACT GROUP HAS MADE CLEAR THAT ALL ASPECTS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS MUST BE AGREED BY ALL PARTIES TO THE NAMIBIA QUESTION, BE HANDLED IN CONFORMITY WITH SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 385, AND BE TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE. THE DATES FOR THE ELECTIONS WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE SUBJECT FOR THE TALKS IN NEW YORK, BUT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES COULD THE FIVE, NOR THE REST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, ACCEPT UNILATERAL ACTION ON THE NAMIBIA ELECTIONS. IF SOUTH AFRICA PERSISTS AND ANNOUNCES DATES FOR ELECTIONS THE EXPLORATORY PROCESS AS WELL AS THE CHANCES FOR ANY NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE NAMIBIAN QUESTION WILL BE JEOPARDIZED.

3. THE MISSION SHOULD ALSO PROPOSE THAT SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADORS IN CONTACT GROUP CAPITALS SHOULD BE CALLED IN

AT HIGH LEVEL FOR SIMILAR DEMARCHES.

4. A PARALLEL EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE BY THE FIVE WITH SWAPO THROUGH GURIRAB IN NEW YORK AGAIN URGING THAT SWAPO AGREE TO BEGIN PROXIMITY TALKS IN NEW YORK JANUARY 23. EMBASSY LUSAKA SHOULD REINFORCE THESE APPROACHES WITH MUYONGO, EXPLAINING THAT WE VIEW THE PROXIMITY TALKS AS AN OPPORTUNITY WHICH SWAPO SHOULD NOT PASS UP, NOT ONLY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CONTRIBUTING TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE NAMIBIAN PROBLEM BUT ALSO AS A MEANS TO IMPROVE ITS STATUS VIS-A-VIS THE SAG AND OTHER NAMIBIAN GROUPS.

5. THE DEPARTMENT CANNOT SUPPORT TALKS WITH SOUTH AFRICANS IN NEW YORK IN ABSENCE OF SWAPO DELEGATION. THE CONTACT GROUP'S PROPOSAL WILL CONTAIN LITTLE MORE IN SUB-CONFIDENTIAL

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STANCE THAN POINTS WHICH WERE DISCUSSED WITH SAG DURING LAST ROUND IN PRETORIA. THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW YORK TALKS WAS PRECISELY TO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF SAG AND SWAPO PROXIMITY. WERE BOTHA TO COME TO NEW YORK FOR TALKS WITH CONTACT GROUP WITHOUT SWAPO DELEGATION BEING PRESENT, WE FEAR THIS WOULD GIVE BOTHA PRETEXT FOR RETURNING TO PRETORIA AND ANNOUNCING THAT CONTACT GROUP HAD NOTHING NEW TO PROPOSE, THAT SWAPO HAD FAILED TO SHOW UP AS INVITED, AND THAT SAG HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO GO AHEAD AND ANNOUNCE DATE OF NAMIBIAN ELECTIONS. MOREOVER, BOTHA'S INSISTANCE ON COMING TO NEW YORK ON JANUARY 23 EVEN THOUGH HE KNOWS THAT PROXIMITY TALKS ARE NOT POSSIBLE SUGGESTS THAT HIS MAIN PURPOSE WILL BE TO EXPLOIT U.S. MEDIA ON BEHALF OF SAG'S POLICIES.

6. FOR LAGOS: YOU SHOULD ASK GARBA OR OTHER SENIOR OFFICIAL TO URGE SWAPO'S ATTENDANCE ON 23RD, DRAWING ON ARGUMENTATION PARA 4 ABOVE. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE008298
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SESCUDERO/TNILES
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780018-0045
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780169/aaaacgcv.tel
Line Count: 154
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1737fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3782678
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAMIBIA: PROXIMITY TALKS IN NEW YORK
TAGS: PORG, PDEV, SF, WA
To: USUN NEW YORK LAGOS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1737fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014